

Finance & General Purposes Committee

**Minutes: 30 September 2019
9.30am at Lanscove House**

Present: Mr Roy Gillard
Mrs Isabel Cherrett
Ms Nicola Dunford
Mrs Cheryl Mathieson

In attendance: Clerk – Becky Ames

Welcome:

Welcome by Roy Gillard, Chair of Finance & General Purposes Committee

Apologies: The Committee accepted apologies from the Trust Business Manager Matt Matthew.

Declaration of Business Interests: there were none.

1. **Minutes of the previous meeting**

With minor editorial changes, the Minutes of the F&GP meeting held on 5 July 2019 were signed as an accurate record.

2. **Matters Arising**

2.1 Payroll Provider

The Committee remain concerned about the level of accuracy in the service provided. The Chair and TBM continue to discuss this issue and will update the Committee on 29 November 2019..

3. **Academies Financial Handbook and annual review of the Committee's Constitution and Terms of Reference in line with the Scheme of Delegation**

3.1 Chair's summary of the 2019 AFH

Over the summer, the Chair of the Board had prepared a summary of the main changes to the new Handbook and had suggested where practice might be reviewed. She had asked that each Committee consider her report at their next meeting.

The Committee noted the references under Part 2: Main Financial Requirements and the suggested reporting arrangements set out on page 5, Appendix A, the Action Plan.. .

Although generally, the Board considered that the Trust is compliant with the Handbook's requirements, the Committee agreed that the level of challenge posed to officers and records of such discussions should be more explicit in Minutes.

ND would like to provide further training within the Local Boards giving the Governors understanding of their individual roles to ensure greater **challenge**.

2.14 ACTION TBM and MF estates portfolio holder to progress.

2.55 The Chair of the Board (IJC) was disappointed that the expected transfer of the role of Company Secretary had not been implemented as planned ACTION ND to follow up.

3.2 Constitution and Terms of Reference

The Committee conducted its annual review of its Constitution and Terms of Reference and noted there is currently one vacancy for a Director. In reviewing the duties, the following changes were agreed:

- To increase the number of meetings per year from four to six as is current practice
- To add responsibility for overseeing general HR arrangements
- To add responsibility for ensuring the Trust is compliant with the new General Data Protection Regulation and the latest Data Protection Act 2018.
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Action: The Chair of the Board agreed to draft the amendments, which would be submitted to the Board for approval; this would include the explanatory note discussed by the Remuneration Committee regarding the terminology of Directors and Trustees.

In considering whether the Committee was fulfilling its duties, Directors agreed that more information regarding the frequency and depth of inspections in terms of Health and Safety needed to come to the Committee for discussion.

Action: The Chair of the Board would be meeting Clare Slee, the H&S Officer shortly and would report back.

Action: The CEO would raise this with Executive/Academy Heads and ask that this is discussed by the Local Boards.

Action: The Clerk to add Health and Safety and Data Protection as Standing Items at each meeting.

The CEO cited a recent incident where the school security was not satisfactory and would raise this with E/AHs to identify where this needed to be improved. The Committee **challenged** ND regarding the MAT's current position regarding Data Protection, the ND informed the Committee that Mrs Susan Howard (SH) is currently looking into engaging consultancy with a specialist Data Protection Company for 12-24 months to help set this up.

3.3 Scheme of Delegation

The Chair of Trustees and CEO reported on the discussion with Christina Mabin, Exeter Diocese, on 9 September 2019 regarding the Scheme. As a condition of the conversion of the two Raleigh Federation Schools, the Trust is required to update its Scheme of Delegation. Mrs Mabin had provided a template which enabled the Scheme to be developed from the responsibilities set out in each of the Trust's policies. After some discussion, it was agreed to defer discussion of the Financial Procedures Manual so that it could be considered alongside the updated Scheme of Delegation at the next Committee meeting on 29 November 2019.

ACTION BA to make the Financial Procedures Manual an Agenda item for 29.11.2019.

3.4 Articles of Association

The Committee noted that the Diocese has recommended amendments to the Articles of Association in preparation for the transfer of Drakes and Otterton to the Link on 1 October 2019, which safeguards their Church foundation. The Chair of Directors IJC had reviewed these and suggested further amendments to aid the understanding and operation of the Articles. The Diocese's legal advisers had put the changes informally to the Department for Education (DfE) and all amendments had been agreed in principle. The revised Articles would be submitted to the Board for discussion on 7 October 2019 and, if agreed, they would be presented to the Members for adoption by Resolution.

RG and the Committee extended their thanks to IJC for completing this task.

4. Finance

4.1 Financial year 2018-19

The Chair RG noted the Month-end reports for the Trust and Academies – to 31 August 2019. RG and TBM have met to discuss the month end reports and informed the Committee that there are 3 schools in deficit. TBM is currently working alongside AH's to improve their budget management.

4.2 Financial year 2019-20

Deferred until 29 November 2019.

4.3 Future funding

ND updated the Committee and will submitting a new bid to TCaF for further funding to support future growth.

5. **Catering Provision for Schools**

Deferred until 29 November 2019 to allow for a term's operation, but overall it is proving to be a success.

6. **Trust Risk Register**

The Trust Risk Register was reviewed by the Standards & Curriculum Committee when it was agreed that some of the 'risks' could be collapsed into a single risk. However, there were a number of risks that needed to be added to the Register and it will be discussed further at the next S&C meeting. IJC welcomed the Committee's input to the Trust Risk Register but also AH's.

The Register is divided into key areas which all fall into one of the Board's four Committees. RG has asked that F&GP review the following sections at each meeting:

- Staffing and Employment
- Finance and Financial Sustainability
- Infrastructure – Estate
- Infrastructure – IT Business and Education
- Infrastructure – Health, Safety and Environment

Amendments should then be added/removed to the Register where appropriate.

7. **Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA)**

RG presented updates from the weekly ESFA Bulletins and sought assurance that the Trust had responded to all deadlines. The CEO suggested that he discuss these in his regular meetings with the TBM so that updates could be given at each Committee meeting.

8. **Property**

ND informed the Committee that we received no funding from CIF in 2018-2019. The Committee noted the current projects where we will be applying for CIF funding.

9. **Policies**

There are three policies to be renewed by the Trustees.

9.1 Accounting Policy – It was agreed IJC would insert the Trustee/Director introduction and to amend first paragraph, remove Longer Life Fixtures and Fittings

9.2 Capital and Revenue Reserves Policy – ACTION IJC to amend first paragraph, the Committee agreed that it should discuss the Capital Budget alongside the detailed Revenue Budget discussions.

9.3 Fair Processing Policy – ACTION IJC to amend first paragraph, Data Protection Act is now 2018 which needs amending.

ACTION Mrs Susan Howard (SH) to check whether the new Data Protection Act 2018 retains any additional requirements about issuing a Fair Processing notice. The Committee will approve this at the next meeting.

9.4 Data Protection Policy - Deferred until we have professional advice on the new Data Protection Act 2018.

10. **HR Issues**

There are currently no updates or issues from Mrs Susan Howard HR Officer. CM and ND are currently reviewing and improving the recruitment process across the MAT.

11. **Griffin Internal Audit Report – Payroll and Fixed Assets**

The Committee noted the report of 17 July 2019 and the Management Response to the Recommendations in Section 4.

12. **IT**

The Committee expressed concern at the lengthy delay in providing the replacement for Google Drive which provided Directors' with the many papers and documents required to fulfil their obligations. Whilst it was noted that those schools which may be inspected during 2019-20 had been prioritised, the Committee asked that this be made a priority. The recent review of many policies would have been far easier with a shared facility and security of documents could be compromised by issuing them via email. ND believes this can be set up quite quickly and recognises the importance for Directors to have access online to all of the relevant supporting documents.

ACTION BA to add IT as an agenda item 29.11.2019.

13. **Dates of Future Meetings**

29 November 2019

7 February 2020

27 March 2020

1 May 2020

3 July 2020

Issued: 30 September 2019